

You Get So Alone at Times That It Just Makes Sense

Charles Bukowski

RETIREMENT

pork chops, said my father, I love pork chops!
and I watched him slide the grease into his
mouth.
pancakes, he said, pancakes with
syrup, butter and bacon!
I watched his lips heavy wetted with all that.
coffee, he said, I like coffee so hot it burns my
throat!
sometimes it was too hot and he spit it out across
the table.
mashed potatoes and gravy, he said, I
love mashed potatoes and gravy!
he jowled that in, his cheeks puffed as
if he had the mumps.
chili and beans, he said, I love chili and beans!
and he gulped it down and farted for hours
loudly, grinning after each fart.
strawberry shortcake, he said, with vanilla
ice cream, that's the way to end a meal!
he always talked about retirement, about
what he was going to do when he retired.
when he wasn't talking about food he talked
on and on about retirement.
he never made it to retirement, he died one day
while standing at the sink
filling a glass of water.
he straightened like he'd been shot.
the glass fell from his hand
and he dropped backwards
landing flat his necktie slipping to the left.
afterwards
people said they couldn't believe it.
he looked great.
distinguished white
sideburns, pack of smokes in his
shirt pocket, always cracking
jokes, maybe a little

loud and maybe with a bit of bad temper
but all in all a seemingly sound
individual
never missing a day of work.